

Appendix E – Ramp Closures

The following serves as an example of a requisite study that was prepared to address temporary ramp closures. Places and names have been changed from their true identity. Exhibits which accompanied the original report, depicting specific project configuration details and minutes of a meeting between the hospital and Caltrans staff, are not reproduced here. This sample was adopted from a study report prepared by Mr. Cleve Govan, Senior Environmental Planner, Caltrans.

This report was prepared to address the impacts of temporarily closing on- and off-ramps along I-222. These ramp closings are necessitated by the proposed project which requires the widening of the I-222 freeway in the vicinity of O'Brien Street. In order to prevent the purchase of additional right-of-way, the construction of many retaining walls is required as the new ramps are built using the location of the old ramps. Consequently, it is not feasible to stage the work allowing the old ramps to remain in operation while the new ramps are constructed. The new O'Brien Street Park-and-Ride lot will be constructed on the west side of the I-222 freeway, north of O'Brien Street, at the site of the Egyptian Restaurant.

The existing ramp system provides direct access to and from O'Brien Street for southbound freeway vehicles. Northbound freeway access to and from O'Brien Street is provided via Letterman Avenue. The on-ramps will be closed for a period of two years and the off-ramps will be closed for a duration of 6 to 9 months.

A brief description of the project area is as follows: The immediate project vicinity is the commercial area along O'Brien Street to the east and west of I-222, roughly between Letterman Avenue and Leno Boulevard. Letterman Avenue and Leno Boulevard are north-south arterials paralleling the I-222 freeway to the east and west, respectively. The portions of these arterials between 14th and 20th Streets are also considered part of the immediate project vicinity.

Typical businesses along O'Brien Street include service stations, fast food restaurants, mini-malls, small private business establishments (including a thrift store and real estate office), and professional buildings. Land use along Letterman Avenue ranges from a liquor store and a veterinary facility to apartments, condominiums, single-family dwellings, and convalescent hospitals. Land use along Leno Boulevard is more of a light-industrial nature, with a car wash, lumber company, light manufacturing facilities, a vacant nursery, a Chinese restaurant, and several convalescent hospitals. The Twinkle Star Trailer Court is on the east side of Leno Boulevard, extending along the north side of 20th Street and abutting the freeway right-of-way, and paralleling the west side of the freeway north to O'Brien Street. Perhaps the most sensitive land use in the project area is the Lucky Clover Medical Center at the southwest quadrant of O'Brien Street and Leno Blvd. The main building of the facility dates to 1962, although other structures were built as early as 1943.

The County of Los Angeles/City of Chester corporate boundary traverses the project area in a north-south fashion parallel to, and just east of, I-222. The Lucky Clover Medical Center is west of the corporate boundary in the unincorporated county area. The Medical Center is a major

provider of health care in the area. It also provides emergency services, and potential impacts to emergency vehicle access to the health facility were one of Caltrans' major concerns.

All of the businesses and non-profit organizations in the project area, including the Lucky Clover Medical Center, have a portion of their respective patrons that arrive and exit by the O'Brien Street on- and off-ramps from I-222. These ramps also serve the nearby residential areas, as previously noted, as well as the more distant communities of Brookfall and Eagles Nest.

Patrons seeking access from I-222 freeway to the business establishments in the project area will need to find alternative routes. Fortunately, such alternative routes do exist. I-222 south-bound traffic to O'Brien Street would exit the off-ramp at 23rd Street (.5 mile to the south), and backtrack to O'Brien Street along Letterman Avenue or Leno Blvd.; or exit at Java Road (.8 mile to the north) via Tea Avenue to proceed to the project area. Likewise, I-222 northbound off-ramp traffic to O'Brien Street would exit at Rodeo Street (1.7 miles to the south), and proceed to the project area along Letterman Avenue or Leno Blvd.; or, exit at Java Road via Letterman Avenue or Leno Blvd. Southbound and northbound on-ramps from O'Brien Street will be closed, with alternate freeway access from 23rd Street or Java Road via Tea Avenue, and Rodeo St. or Java Road via Letterman Avenue, respectively.

Because there are viable alternative routes to and from the commercial area along O'Brien Street and Letterman Avenue and Leno Blvd., it appears that potential business patrons would have adequate access to the project area during the ramp closure period. Likewise, access to residences in the project area or more distant residential communities would not be adversely impacted. However, due to the emergency access needs of the Lucky Clover Medical Center, Caltrans prepared an access time analysis to determine the additional time required for emergency vehicles to access the Medical Center when using the previously discussed alternative routes. In addition, Caltrans met with Medical Center staff to discuss the ramp closures and identify any of their concerns. The staff indicated that with advance notification and coordination the emergency drivers will be able to cope with the construction schedules. Caltrans resident engineers will work closely with the medical staff.

The access time analysis indicates the extra time required to access the hospital via alternative routes is not inordinate. It takes 1 minute and 22 seconds (on the average) to access the Medical Center from the southbound freeway off-ramp to O'Brien Street. Using this as the base condition, the access times of the alternative routes can be compared. Utilizing the 23rd Street southbound off-ramp route requires 49 additional seconds, while utilizing the Java Road southbound off-ramp requires an additional 1 minute, 14 seconds. Likewise, using the I-222 northbound off-ramp to O'Brien Street takes an average of 3 minutes, 4 seconds to access the Medical Center. Using this as the base condition, it takes 13 seconds longer to access the hospital utilizing the northbound off-ramp to Rodeo Street route, while utilizing the Java Road northbound off-ramp route requires an additional 1 minute, 24 seconds to access the Medical Center.

On September 14, 1994, Caltrans and Lucky Clover Medical Center staffs met at the hospital to allow Caltrans an opportunity to identify any concerns that the institution may have regarding access impacts due to temporarily closing the O'Brien Street ramps.

For northbound motorists, freeway access is provided at Java Road or Rodeo Street. For southbound motorists, freeway access is provided at Rodeo Street, 23rd Street, or Java Road.

As mitigation for the long-term closure of the off-ramps, particularly with regards to emergency vehicle access, Caltrans will require the contractor to complete the off-ramps as a first order of work to insure that the new off-ramps will be in service as soon as possible. The on-ramps would be closed for the duration of the contract.

Because there are viable alternative routes to the project area and access time to the area via these alternative routes is not inordinate, it is concluded that the various businesses and non-profit organizations would not suffer adverse patronage losses during closure of the I-222 freeway on- and off-ramps from and to O'Brien Street. This conclusion is further reinforced by the results of the meeting with the Lucky Clover Medical Center staff as previously discussed.

As demonstrated by the access time analysis, the previously described alternative routes are sufficiently close to O'Brien Street that any driving time adjustments would be less than two minutes. Any inconvenience due to extra driving time would be marginal. Likewise, because driving time adjustments would be minimal, no appreciable increase in energy consumption would result. Even though the O'Brien Street ramp closures do not pose an adverse impact on the businesses in the project area, or surrounding residential communities, the following measures are suggested:

- Notify the local business and commercial concerns of the temporary closure of these ramps and alternative routes.
- Notify emergency public services, such as the Medical Center, fire departments, and local ambulance services.
- Inform the California Highway Patrol and other appropriate law enforcement agencies of the proposed action.
- Notify the County Supervisor's Office and the city in which the ramps are located to discuss the proposal with them.
- If the Supervisor's Office and/or the city deems it worthy, conduct an open house(s) to discuss the proposal for closing the ramps with the public.
- Keep the county and affected city Traffic Engineer apprised.

Before closing the ramps, mail out informational notices, issue press releases, and make public service radio announcements to inform the public in advance of the closures.